

Dolce Far Niente.

A little time of silence in the heat,
A little time of indolent delight,
A little slumber at her gentle feet
Who brings enchantment and excess of
light:
A little languid dreaming in the sun,
And, ah, how simply happiness is won!
Long have we toll'd in dusty city ways,
To snare the flying form that will not
turn
And bless us, all our bitter, strenuous
days:
Long have we borne with hearts that
throb and yearn,
The sting of sorrow, Every human woe
Has stricken us, and yet we did not
know.
We did not know what happy dreamers
guess,
That only when the busy hands are
still,
And thought contents itself in idleness,
Is she subservient to our grasping will.
Then, 'twixt a slumber and a sigh, man
hears
The mem'ry haunting music of the years.
A little time shut in with flow'rs and
leaves,
A little space to watch the clouds go
by,
Drifting in depths of blue, and sadness
leaves
The heart as fresh and radiant as the
sky;
And she who scorn'd us when we could
but weep,
Visits our heart: when they are prone to
sleep.

—Pall Mall Gazette.



Brampton Hay's Pot-Boiler By LLOYD WILLIAMS

"What's this?" she asked, knitting a pair of clearly-penciled eyebrows.

"That's only a pot-boiler," he replied, airily.

For two years he had been painting mysterious "impressions" to the immense satisfaction of himself and a select circle of highly intellectual, long-haired friends. They were wonderful pictures with fantastic titles, and might be hung in any light without loss of effect, but the British public showed no disposition to purchase them.

Now, considered as impressions, Brampton Hay's pictures were undeniable. Considered as salable articles for the decoration of galleries or rooms they were a complete failure. Consequently when he observed that his modest banking account was becoming so ridiculously modest as to approach the non-existent state, like a wise young man he set to work on something likely to prove convertible into money.

"What is a pot-boiler?" she asked. "I suppose you will think me a Philistine for not knowing, but although I have often heard the word I have never properly understood it."

"Pot-boiling," he said, with the self-confident air of a young man who has absorbed the wisdom of the ages, "is the art of painting or writing 'rot.'"

She looked at him in amazement and then turned and looked again at the picture, which until she arrived had stood on the ground, face to the wall, in disgrace.

"Why paint 'rot'?" she asked. "Because the public like it," he said gravely, "and when the public like a thing they buy it; buying it involves paying for it, and when people pay for things you have the wherewithal to purchase bread and butter and possibly a small piece of cheese to go with it."

"You mean that the public don't buy these?" she said, indicating with a sweep of her arm the stacks of "impressions" with which the little studio was furnished.

"They don't," he said, dryly.

"But they will buy this?" she said, indicating the pot-boiler.

"With all my heart I hope so," he said.

"One more question," she murmured, with a pretty smile, "and then I will try not to be a Philistine again. In what respect is that picture 'rot'?"

He looked at his handiwork with his head on one side while an expression somewhere between pride and disdain flickered across his face. Why was it "rot?" He hardly knew how to explain it in so many words.

"You see, there is no artistic pre-

tension in that picture," he said slowly. "There is no—eh—tone, no imaginative effect, no subtle contrast. The picture doesn't appeal to you as a picture, but as a story."

"Mustn't a picture mean anything, then?" she asked, innocently.

"To be sure it should," he said, hurriedly. "But its meaning should be pictorial, not—"

"Not human?"

"Not narrative," he corrected severely. Then he added with deep disdain: "That is the kind of picture people will affix in its print form to cottage walls."

"I suppose that would be humiliating," she remarked, demurely.

"You are laughing at me," he said, with a perfectly good-tempered smile.

"Not at all; I am honestly trying to understand the point of view," she said hastily, giving him a look which, had he happened to see it, would have cheered him more than a dozen favorable criticisms. "I suppose I shall always be a Philistine," she went on, "for it seems to me that this picture is the best in the room."

He looked at her in silent astonishment, and perhaps disappointment.

"Let me see if I understand it," she said. "You have a farm house, and by the red clay soil I should say it is Devonshire, or at any rate west country. In a field outside the homestead there is a young man lying asleep and a dear old mongrel doggie is looking at him. The title of the picture is 'The New Road.' Just at first it sounds unsuitable, but let me see if I have guessed the riddle correctly. The young man is half starving and utterly exhausted, his clothes are Londonified but in rags; his boots are dropping off his feet, he is dead beat, at the lowest ebb of despair. But he has in fact struck the new road. He has



"That's only a pot-boiler," he said, airily.

been to London and gone more than half way to the bad, then he has turned his face toward home. He seems to have tramped most of the way, and he has arrived there just before daybreak one spring morning. Utterly worn out, he has flung himself down under a blossom-laden apple tree and fallen asleep. The sun has risen and the dog has found him. It is the prodigal son in a new guise. You call it 'The New Road'—that is, he has turned his back on the old road and is going to begin afresh."

He seemed to be about to offer some explanation, for he kept his artistic faculties quite apart from his love of human nature, and was about to explain that a beautiful story is not the same thing as a beautiful picture, but at that moment a girl's voice was heard.

"Are you two people never coming to tea?" she said.

So the two people strolled into the adjoining room where the fiancée of Brampton Hay's chum was dispensing tea.

It was a red-letter afternoon for the two young artists when the girls swooped down upon them unexpectedly. Sir George Chalmers had found

it necessary to run up to London on business, and had very properly brought his daughter and her visitor with him for the outing.

Clem Wilton, who shared a studio with Hay, was naturally enraptured when his sweetheart wired to say she was coming.

But even his joy was exceeded by that of his friend at the news that Lucy Chalmers would take part in the "swoop." The two young men had spent a cheery holiday the year before in Devonshire, where they had both fallen victims to the young gentleman who is usually represented as being attired in the Spartan simplicity of a bow and arrow. But their fates were widely different. Clem, who was a nobody in particular, had succumbed to the charms of a girl whose position was not more exalted than his own. Consequently, in due course they were comfortably engaged in quite the old-fashioned, commonplace way.

But Brampton Hay had no such luck; although the two girls were friends, he had the misfortune to fall in love with the one who was daughter to two millions of money. Now, birth and position are often bars to romantic unions, but there is no bar so inseparable as enormous wealth.

Consequently Brampton and Lucy understood from the first that their cause was practically hopeless. They made no particular secret of their affection, for Sir George had no dislike for the young man himself and was wise enough not to oppose his daughter's "admirer" so long as the "family duty" was perfectly understood.

"My dear old Brampton," the girl had said when he proposed for the twenty-seventh time, "you know what my feelings are, but what can I do? I suppose it's awfully unheroic of me, but I would no more think of marrying a man to whom old dad objected than I would think of marrying a man to whom I objected myself."

"Perhaps he will come 'round some day," said Brampton.

"Perhaps so," she said, with a wistful smile.

Women have more patience, and it must be admitted, more common sense in these matters. She was very fond of Brampton, and was certain that, as his wife, she would have been extremely happy; but she also saw that it was not to be.

It was while the four young people were sitting at tea that the housekeeper—a woman of most respectable ugliness—announced a gentleman.

"I suppose I must see who it is," said Brampton.

He strolled out into the studio where his visitor awaited him and found it was Sir George Chalmers himself, who had finished his business earlier than he anticipated.

"You are just in time for a cup of tea, sir," said Brampton, with the heartiness appropriate to the father of the girl he wanted to marry.

The old man paid no attention to the welcome nor to the outstretched hand.

"What do you mean by that picture?" he asked, pointing to the pot-boiler.

"That? Oh! that is just a little fancy picture," said Brampton.

He was somewhat astonished at the question because hitherto Sir George had declined to take any interest in his work, having no "fancy for the rubbish."

"Yes, yes," said the old fellow, testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farm house," he said. "Where is it? What is its name?"

"That is More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler I used it."

"You were born there," muttered Sir George. "But who is the young

man lying asleep, and why do you call it 'The New Road?'"

"The true history of the picture is this," said Brampton. "Before I was born a young man was found one morning asleep under the apple tree just outside the orchard. He was half starving and in rags. My mother, who never allowed a stranger to go away empty, took him in, tubbed him and clothed him, fixed him up with a square breakfast, and sent him away rejoicing. Before he left the young fellow told her his story. He had got himself into an ugly scrape in London—gone to the bad, in fact—and had run away. Of course, she gave him a straight talk—you know what women are, sir," Brampton cleared his throat hastily, "and made him promise to go home and make a clean breast of it."

"What suggested the title?" asked Sir George, bluntly.

"A whimsical notion of my own," said Brampton. "When my mother had finished with him she put him on his road, for he had lost his bearings. She took him to the door and told him to go to the right by the new road over the hill. It is a fantastic idea, but I took it as my title. Of course, nobody will ever know exactly what I meant by it, though your daughter gave a very shrewd guess at the general meaning."

Sir George looked at the picture for a few minutes with blinking eyes, while Brampton watched him in silence.

"Would you care to hear the rest of that story?" the old man asked.

"I should indeed, sir."

"That lad left the farm with the kiss of a good woman on his cheek and the blessing of God in his ears, and he kept his word and went home," said Sir George in a low voice. "His own mother wept over him and his father flogged him heartily for a skulking young thief, and between them they made a man of him. Afterwards he went to America and prospered well enough, and when he returned to England he even came to some honor."

The old man had mentioned no names, and Brampton, with rare tact, was equally silent.

"The end of the story justifies my title, sir," was all he said.

"Curiously enough," added Sir George, "he never succeeded in finding his way back to thank that woman, though he often tried. It was a kind of lost chapter in his life, though he never forgot it. Ah! here is Lucy."

She had heard her father's voice and entered the studio, but seeing by the faces of the two men that something unusual had been happening, she stood in silence.

At last Sir George spoke in the steady, matter-of-fact voice of the true-born Anglo-Saxon who will suffer internal agony rather than display any emotion.

"I have finished earlier than I expected, Lucy," he said, "but there is another call I must make, so I will come back for you in about an hour."

The old man spoke as if he were half dazed, but he walked to the door of the studio with a firm step. Here, however, he stopped and said, with a note of tenderness in his voice which was unfamiliar to Brampton, though not to Lucy, "Tell her the true story of 'The New Road.' Tell her all. Keep nothing back."

He paused, but went on steadily, "Tell her what it means to me, what it means to her. It will be for her to say what it means to you."

And with that he left them.—The Tattler.

May Visit Cripple Creek.

It is expected that Cripple Creek, Colo., will be the meeting place of the Transmississippi commercial congress next year. The business men are anxious to visit "the greatest gold camp on earth," whose production of the yellow metal for the last ten years, if made into \$20-pieces and placed edge to edge, would make a continuous band of gold from New York to San Francisco.